

A decorative blue floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns, framing the central text.

# **GUZ 30 Amos**

*Bible Commentary:  
David Guzik TEV - XXX*

**David Guzik**

**David Guziks' Commentary On**  
**30 Amos**  
**Biblical Text – TEV (Good News Bible)**

**Amo 1:1** These are the words of Amos, a shepherd from the town of Tekoa. Two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel, God revealed to Amos all these things about Israel.

**Judgment on Israel's Neighbors**

Amo 1:2 Amos said, "The LORD roars from Mount Zion; his voice thunders from Jerusalem. The pastures dry up, and the grass on Mount Carmel turns brown."

Amo 1:3 The LORD says, "The people of Damascus have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They treated the people of Gilead with savage cruelty.

Amo 1:4 So I will send fire upon the palace built by King Hazael and I will burn down the fortresses of King Benhadad.

Amo 1:5 I will smash the city gates of Damascus and remove the inhabitants of Aven Valley and the ruler of Betheden. The people of Syria will be taken away as prisoners to the land of Kir."

Amo 1:6 The LORD says, "The people of Gaza have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They carried off a whole nation and sold them as slaves to the people of Edom.

Amo 1:7 So I will send fire upon the city walls of Gaza and burn down its fortresses.

Amo 1:8 I will remove the rulers of the cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon. I will punish the city of Ekron, and all the

Philistines who are left will die."

Amo 1:9 The LORD says, "The people of Tyre have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They carried off a whole nation into exile in the land of Edom, and did not keep the treaty of friendship they had made.

Amo 1:10 So I will send fire upon the city walls of Tyre and burn down its fortresses."

Amo 1:11 The LORD says, "The people of Edom have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They hunted down their relatives, the Israelites, and showed them no mercy. Their anger had no limits, and they never let it die.

Amo 1:12 So I will send fire upon the city of Teman and burn down the fortresses of Bozrah."

Amo 1:13 The LORD says, "The people of Ammon have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. In their wars for more territory they even ripped open pregnant women in Gilead.

Amo 1:14 So I will send fire upon the city walls of Rabbah and burn down its fortresses. Then there will be shouts on the day of battle, and the fighting will rage like a storm.

Amo 1:15 Their king and his officers will go into exile."

## **Amos 1:1-15**

### **Amos 1 – Judgment on the Nations**

#### **A. The man and his message.**

*1. (1) Amos the man.*

**The words of Amos, who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.**

a. **The words of Amos:** This book of the prophet Amos is the only mention we have of this man in the Old Testament. The books of 1 and 2 Kings or 1 and 2 Chronicles do not mention this prophet, and he should not be confused with *Amoz*, the father of Isaiah the prophet (Isa 1:1).

i. The name **Amos** means *burden* or *burden bearer*. Since most of the prophecies of Amos concern coming judgment on either the nations surrounding Israel or judgment on Israel itself, he was a man with a *burden*.

b. **Who was among the sheepbreeders of Tekoa:** It seems that Amos had no formal theological or prophetic training, though there was a school of the prophets known as the *sons of the prophets* at that time (1Ki 20:35, 2Ki 2:3-15, 2Ki 4:1, 2Ki 4:38). Amos was a simple man, a farmer, who had been uniquely called to ministry.

i. Amos spoke of his background and calling in Amo 7:14-15 : *I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'*

ii. Amos used an unusual word to describe his occupation. Instead of calling himself a *shepherd*, the literal ancient Hebrew called Amos a *sheep raiser*. Amos probably chose this title to emphasize the fact that he really was a shepherd, and that he did not mean "shepherd" in a symbolic, spiritual sense. The way God used Amos reminds us of the way He used the twelve disciples of Jesus – common, workingmen used to do great things for God.

iii. Amos was from Tekoa, a city about ten miles from Jerusalem. It seems that he delivered his prophetic message at Bethel (Amo 7:13), one of the southernmost cities of Israel – not very far from Tekoa.

c. **Which he saw concerning Israel:** Amos was primarily a prophet to **Israel**, though he also spoke to many nations. He served in the days of the divided monarchy (**the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash**). Most researchers date the ministry of Amos somewhere between 760 B.C. and 750 B.C.

i. When Amos served as a prophet, the people of God had been divided into two nations for more than 150 years. The southern nation was known as **Judah**, and the northern nation was still known as **Israel**. Through the period of the divided monarch the southern kingdom of Judah saw a succession of kings, some godly and some ungodly (**Uzziah** was one of the better kings of Judah). The northern kingdom of **Israel** saw nothing but a series of wicked kings. **Jeroboam the son of Joash** was one of the better kings among these wicked men – especially in a political and military sense – but he was still an ungodly man (2Ki 14:23-29).

ii. For most of its history, the northern kingdom of Israel struggled against Syria – her neighbor to the north. But around the year 800 B.C., the mighty Assyrian Empire defeated Syria and neutralized this power that hindered Israel's expansion and prosperity. With Syria in check, Israel enjoyed great prosperity during the reign of Jeroboam II.

d. **Two years before the earthquake:** "We have no independent record of this earthquake, so *that* phrase is

no help to us in dating" (Boice).

2. (2) *The message of Amos.*

**And he said:**

**"The LORD roars from Zion,  
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;  
The pastures of the shepherds mourn,  
And the top of Carmel withers."**

a. **The LORD roars from Zion:** Amos brought a message of judgment. The first two chapters of Amos described the judgment of the LORD, first against Gentile nations then against Judah and Israel.

b. **And utters His voice from Jerusalem:** Israel – in direct disobedience to God – established rival centers of worship in Dan, Bethel, and Gilgal. When Amos said that the LORD speaks from Jerusalem, he reminded all of Israel where the center of true worship was.

c. **The pastures of the shepherds mourn:** Since Amos was a shepherd himself (Amo 7:14) he knew how the judgment of God could affect the land. If God withheld rain, sent plagues, or allowed conquering armies to come upon the land, it made **the pastures of the shepherds mourn**.

d. **The top of Carmel withers:** **Carmel** was a prominent mountain in the north of Israel, the site of Elijah's dramatic confrontation with the prophets of Baal (1Ki 18:19-40). Since Elijah served before the time of Amos, it may be that Amos was reminding Israel of this victory of the Lord GOD over idolatry.

**B. Judgment on the nations.**

1. (3-5) *Judgment on Damascus, the capital of Syria.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four,**

**I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they have threshed Gilead with implements  
of iron.**

**But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,  
Which shall devour the palaces of Ben-Hadad.**

**I will also break the *gate* bar of Damascus,  
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven,  
And the one who holds the scepter from Beth Eden.**

**The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,"  
Says the LORD.**

a. **For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** This phrase will introduce God's announcement of judgment against each nation. It didn't mean that **Damascus** only committed three sins, and then God thought of a fourth sin; it simply has the idea of "sin upon sin upon sin."

b. **Because they have threshed Gilead with implements of iron:** The region of **Gilead** belonged to Israel, and God promised to judge Damascus and the Syrians for coming against the land of God's people, and coming with such complete destruction that it would be as if a deep plow had been run through the land.

i. "*Threshing sledges* with iron prongs or teeth are probably a figure of speech implying extreme cruelty and utter thoroughness in the treatment of those who opposed." (Hubbard)

c. **The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir:** This was fulfilled in 2Ki 16:9, which describes when the Assyrians attacked Syria because King Ahaz of Judah paid them. *So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin (2Ki 16:9).*

2. (6-8) *Judgment on Gaza, a city of the Philistines.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**“For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they took captive the whole captivity  
To deliver *them* up to Edom.  
But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,  
Which shall devour its palaces.  
I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,  
And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;  
I will turn My hand against Ekron,  
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,”  
Says the Lord GOD.**

a. **Because they took captive the whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom:** **Gaza** was a city of the Philistines, on the coast to the west of Israel and Judah. Because they came against God’s people and did **deliver them up to Edom**, God promised to bring judgment against **Gaza** and the other cities of the Philistines (**Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Ekron**).

b. **The whole captivity:** “The condemnation here is not against slavery in and of itself, just as the previous oracle was not against war in and of itself. The crime is not that soldiers were enslaved after being taken in battle, which was the standard practice, but that the Philistines used their temporary supremacy to enslave whole populations – soldiers and civilians, men and women, adults and children, young and old – for commercial profit. Gaza did not even need the slaves. She merely sold them to Edom for more money” (Boice).

3. (9-10) *Judgment on Tyre, a city of Lebanon.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**“For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to**



**Edom,  
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.  
But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,  
Which shall devour its palaces."**

a. **Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom:** Since the city of **Tyre** (of Lebanon, to the north of Israel) sinned against God's people as the Philistines did (Amo 1:6-8), they would receive a similar judgment (**fire upon the wall of Tyre**).

b. **A fire upon the wall of Tyre:** The walls of a city were her defense and strength. If the walls were burnt, the city would be defeated.

4. (11-12) *Judgment on Edom.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"For three transgressions of Edom, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because he pursued his brother with the sword,  
And cast off all pity;  
His anger tore perpetually,  
And he kept his wrath forever.  
But I will send a fire upon Teman,  
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."**

a. **Because he pursued his brother with the sword:** The people of **Edom** descended from Esau, the brother of Jacob (later named *Israel*). In this way, the LORD could speak of the people of **Edom** as **brother** to the people of God, in that they shared common ancestors in Abraham and Isaac. God promised judgment against **Edom** because they attacked Judah (2Ki 8:20-22).

b. **And cast off all pity; his anger tore perpetually, and he kept his wrath forever:** Edom held on to **anger** and **wrath** when they should have long before put it away. For this, the judgment of God would come

against them. We need to learn to give our **anger** and **wrath** to God and let Him be our avenger.

*5. (13-15) Judgment on Ammon.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four,**

**I will not turn away its *punishment*,**

**Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead,**

**That they might enlarge their territory.**

**But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,**

**And it shall devour its palaces,**

**Amid shouting in the day of battle,**

**And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.**

**Their king shall go into captivity,**

**He and his princes together,"**

**Says the LORD.**

a. **Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead:** The area of

**Gilead** belonged to Israel and suffered attacks not only from Syria ([Amo 1:3](#)), but also from their neighbor to the west, **Ammon**. We could say that Ammon sinned against the *future* by killing babies in the womb.

b. **Their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together:** Because of their attacks against Israel, God promised judgment again Ammon.

**Amo 2:1** The LORD says, "The people of Moab have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They dishonored the bones of the king of Edom by burning them to ashes.

Amo 2:2 I will send fire upon the land of Moab and burn down the fortresses of Kerioth. The people of Moab will die

in the noise of battle while soldiers are shouting and trumpets are sounding.

Amo 2:3 I will kill the ruler of Moab and all the leaders of the land."

### **Judgment on Judah**

Amo 2:4 The LORD says, "The people of Judah have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They have despised my teachings and have not kept my commands. They have been led astray by the same false gods that their ancestors served.

Amo 2:5 So I will send fire upon Judah and burn down the fortresses of Jerusalem."

### **Judgment on Israel**

Amo 2:6 The LORD says, "The people of Israel have sinned again and again, and for this I will certainly punish them. They sell into slavery honest people who cannot pay their debts, the poor who cannot repay even the price of a pair of sandals.

Amo 2:7 They trample down the weak and helpless and push the poor out of the way. A man and his father have intercourse with the same slave woman, and so profane my holy name.

Amo 2:8 At every place of worship people sleep on clothing that they have taken from the poor as security for debts. In the temple of their God they drink wine which they have taken from those who owe them money.

Amo 2:9 "And yet, my people, it was for your sake that I totally destroyed the Amorites, who were as tall as cedar trees and as strong as oaks.

Amo 2:10 I brought you out of Egypt, led you through the desert for forty years, and gave you the land of the Amorites to be your own.

Amo 2:11 I chose some of your sons to be prophets and some of your young men to be nazirites. Isn't this true, people of Israel? I, the LORD, have spoken.

Amo 2:12 But you made the nazirites drink wine, and ordered the prophets not to speak my message.

Amo 2:13 And now I will crush you to the ground, and you will groan like a cart loaded with grain.

Amo 2:14 Not even fast runners will escape; strong men will lose their strength, and soldiers will not be able to save their own lives.

Amo 2:15 Archers will not stand their ground, fast runners will not get away, and men on horses will not escape with their lives.

Amo 2:16 On that day even the bravest soldiers will drop their weapons and run." The LORD has spoken.

## **Amos 2:1-16**

### **Amos 2 – Judgment on God's People**

#### **A. Judgment on Moab and Judah.**

*1. (1-3) The word of the LORD against Moab.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to  
lime.**

**But I will send a fire upon Moab,  
And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth;  
Moab shall die with tumult,  
With shouting and trumpet sound.  
And I will cut off the judge from its midst,  
And slay all its princes with him,"  
Says the LORD.**

a. **Because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime:** Moab was a southern neighbor to Judah and was the last of the six judgments Amos proclaimed against the Gentile nations in this section. God promised judgment against Moab because of their cruelty to Edom and her king.

i. We could say that Moab sinned against the *past* by desecrating the remains of an Edomite hero.

2. (4-5) *The word of the LORD against Judah.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"For three transgressions of Judah, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they have despised the law of the LORD,  
And have not kept His commandments.  
Their lies lead them astray,  
*Lies* which their fathers followed.  
But I will send a fire upon Judah,  
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."**

a. **For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** It is remarkable to see the same judgment formula applied against Judah – the people of God – as was applied against the previous six Gentile nations. It shows that Judah piled sin upon sin upon sin in the same manner as the other nations.

i. We find it easy – and comfortable – to expose and rebuke the sins of those who aren't the followers of God. That is what Amos did with the first six pronouncements of judgment, but just as Amos went on to look at sin among God's people, we should do the same.

b. **Because they have despised the law of the LORD:** Judah's sin was that they **despised** and

disobeyed **the law of the LORD**. This was a higher accountability than God required of any of the six Gentile nations previously mentioned in Amos. God blessed His people with His **law** and **commandments**, but He expected them to honor and obey His word.

c. **Their lies lead them astray**: Since the word of God brings us *truth*, when we despise and disobey God's word we naturally embrace and follow **lies**. You can't reject the truth without grabbing hold of a lie.

d. **I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem**: Because Judah sinned like the other nations, they would be judged as the other nations, with **fire** against them and their **palaces** (Amo 1:4; Amo 1:7; Amo 1:10; Amo 1:12; Amo 1:14; Amo 2:2).

i. The repeated use of **fire** to express judgment is continued in the New Testament. Without doubt, Amos meant material fire coming against material walls and palaces, but the Bible also uses **fire** in a spiritual way, to describe the purifying work of God in the believer. The Bible says that God will test the works of each believer with fire, to burn away what is unworthy (1Co 3:13-15). The Bible says believers will be tested by fire (1Pe 1:6-7).

ii. When we think of God's purifying fire, we should think the way Peter expressed in 1Pe 4:17 : *For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God*. We should invite God to burn down whatever "walls" or "palaces" we build against Him, so His work can continue in us and through us without hindrance.

## **B. Judgment on Israel.**

### *1. (6-8) The sins of Israel.*

**Thus says the LORD:**

**“For three transgressions of Israel, and for four,  
I will not turn away its *punishment*,  
Because they sell the righteous for silver,  
And the poor for a pair of sandals.  
They pant after the dust of the earth *which is* on the  
head of the poor,  
And pervert the way of the humble.  
A man and his father go in to the *same* girl,  
To defile My holy name.  
They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in  
pledge,  
And drink the wine of the condemned in the house of  
their god.”**

a. **For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment:** The pattern continued. The northern tribes of Israel had piled sin upon sin upon sin, just as the previous seven nations.

b. **Because they sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals:** Amos saw the injustice of rich against the poor, and how the rich took cruel advantage against the poor. More importantly, God saw this injustice and promised judgment.

c. **A man and his father go in to the same girl:** Amos saw the sexual immorality and perversion of his day, and how standards that were once accepted were then disregarded.

i. This probably speaks of father and son using the same ritual, idolatrous prostitute. “They were licentious to the uttermost abomination; for in their idol feasts, where young women prostituted themselves publicly in honor of *Astarte*, the father and son entered into impure connections with the same female” (Clarke).

**d. They lie down by every altar on clothes taken in pledge:** Amos saw the idolatry of his day, and how people worshipped idols even as they cruelly oppressed the poor. Exo 22:26-27 commanded, *If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.* The prophecy of Amos showed that God heard the cry of the oppressed in Israel and would bring judgment against Israel.

i. In combination, the whole picture is almost overwhelming. Amos pictured a man committing sexual immorality with a temple prostitute – the same girl his son visited the day before – and keeping warm with a garment extorted from the poor, toasting his success with wine bought with money dishonestly gained.

2. (9-12) *The goodness of God to Israel and how they despised it.*

**"Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite before them,  
Whose height was like the height of the cedars,  
And he was as strong as the oaks;  
Yet I destroyed his fruit above  
And his roots beneath.  
Also it was I who brought you up from the land of Egypt,  
And led you forty years through the wilderness,  
To possess the land of the Amorite.  
I raised up some of your sons as prophets,  
And some of your young men as Nazirites.  
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"  
Says the LORD.  
"But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,**



**And commanded the prophets saying,  
'Do not prophesy!'**

a. **It was I who destroyed the Amorite before them:** God reminded Israel of His past power and faithfulness to them. When they first came into the Promised Land, they were afraid of the mighty nations like the Amorites. Yet God conquered them. How could they reject and despise a God who had done so much for them?

i. This principle – a walk with God based in gratitude for what He has done for us – is important for the Christian, and shows why the believer must continually hear the message of the cross. We must live our lives in proper gratitude for what the LORD has done for us.

b. **I raised up some of your sons as prophets:** God reminded Israel of the great privilege they had in working together with God. Gratitude for this great honor should have kept them humble and obedient before the LORD, but they rejected and despised Him (**commanded the prophets saying, "Do not prophesy!"**).

c. **And some of your young men as Nazirites:** The vow of a Nazirite was a special vow of dedication unto the LORD, and God gave the gift of this deeper opportunity to Israel. Instead of receiving this honor with gratitude and humility, they rejected and despised the LORD (**you gave the Nazirites wine to drink**).

i. The vow of the Nazirite is described in Numbers 6 and was used to express a special desire to draw close to God and to separate from the comforts and pleasures of this world. Under the Nazirite vow a man would eat or drink nothing from the grape vine, would

not cut his hair, and would not go near any dead carcass.

*3. (13-16) Judgment to come upon Israel.*

**"Behold, I am weighed down by you,  
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed down.  
Therefore flight shall perish from the swift,  
The strong shall not strengthen his power,  
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;  
He shall not stand who handles the bow,  
The swift of foot shall not escape,  
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.  
The most courageous men of might  
Shall flee naked in that day,"  
Says the LORD.**

a. **I am weighed down by you:** God regarded the people of Israel as a weary burden, not as a joy. It is the difference between the pleasure a parent feels in dealing with an obedient child and the drudgery a parent feels in dealing with a stubborn, rebellious child.

i. Any time justice is perverted – any time the rich receive preferential treatment, or the poor are oppressed – it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

ii. Any time people cheat and manipulate and make money off of others in questionable ways – even if it is legal – it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iii. Any time people unfairly profit at the expense of the unfortunate, it burdens the God who sees from heaven and He promises to set it right.

iv. "Now, it is to be understood, dear friends, before we proceed farther, that our text is but a figure, since God is not to be oppressed by man; all the sin that

man can commit can never disturb the serenity of his perfections, nor cause so much as a wave upon the sea of his everlasting calm. He doth but speak to us after the manner of man... so the Lord says that under the load of human guilt he is pressed down, until he crieth out, because he can bear no longer the iniquity of those that offend against him." (Spurgeon)

**b. Flight shall perish from the swift, the strong shall not strengthen his power:** One way the judgment of God would express itself against Israel was that they would find themselves unable to succeed in ways they previously thought they were strong. Without the blessing of God,

**the swift** isn't fast enough, **the strong** isn't strong enough, and **the mighty** isn't mighty enough to succeed. Israel was far too confident in their own ability, but God would bring them low.

i. We can escape this judgment by realizing *now* that even our strength is nothing without the Lord. Paul communicated this idea in 1Co 10:12 : *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* We can become more vulnerable in our perceived *strengths* than in our acknowledged *weaknesses*.

## **Israel's Guilt and Punishment**

**Amo 3:1** People of Israel, listen to this message which the LORD has spoken about you, the entire nation that he brought out of Egypt:

Amo 3:2 "Of all the nations on earth, you are the only one I have known and cared for. That is what makes your sins so terrible, and that is why I must punish you for them."

Amo 3:3 Do two people start traveling together without arranging to meet?

Amo 3:4 Does a lion roar in the forest unless he has found a victim? Does a young lion growl in his den unless he has caught something?

Amo 3:5 Does a bird get caught in a trap if the trap has not been baited? Does a trap spring unless something sets it off?

Amo 3:6 Does the war trumpet sound in a city without making the people afraid? Does disaster strike a city unless the LORD sends it?

Amo 3:7 The Sovereign LORD never does anything without revealing his plan to his servants, the prophets.

Amo 3:8 When a lion roars, who can keep from being afraid? When the Sovereign LORD speaks, who can keep from proclaiming his message?

Amo 3:9 Announce to those who live in the palaces of Egypt and Ashdod: "Gather together in the hills around Samaria and see the great disorder and the crimes being committed there."

Amo 3:10 The LORD says, "These people fill their mansions with things taken by crime and violence. They don't even know how to be honest.

Amo 3:11 And so an enemy will surround their land, destroy their defenses, and plunder their mansions."

Amo 3:12 The LORD says, "As a shepherd recovers only two legs or an ear of a sheep that a lion has eaten, so only a few will survive of Samaria's people, who now recline on luxurious couches.

Amo 3:13 Listen now, and warn the descendants of Jacob," says the Sovereign LORD Almighty.

Amo 3:14 "On the day when I punish the people of Israel for their sins, I will destroy the altars of Bethel. The corners of every altar will be broken off and will fall to the ground.

Amo 3:15 I will destroy winter houses and summer houses. The houses decorated with ivory will fall in ruins; every

large house will be destroyed."

## **Amos 3:1-15**

### **Amos 3 – The Logic of God's Judgment**

#### **A. The logic of God's judgment.**

*1. (1-2) God's love and care for Israel makes their judgment unavoidable.*

**Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:**

**"You only have I known of all the families of the earth;**

**Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."**

a. **Against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt:** Israel's rejection and disregard of God was all the more inexcusable in light of God's great deliverance. When He brought Israel **up from the land of Egypt**, God proved His love and care for Israel; for God to speak **against** them shows He must have been sorely provoked.

i. The central act of redemption in the Old Testament was Israel's exodus from Egypt. All through the Old Testament, God called Israel to look back and remember Him as the one who freed them from Egypt. The central act of redemption in the New Testament – and in God's whole plan of redemption – is the work of Jesus on the cross. In the same way, we are called to constantly look back and remember what Jesus did on the cross and to live in light of that great fact.

b. **You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities:** God made a clear connection between the

great *privilege* of Israel (**you only have I known**) and the great *responsibility* this privilege brings (**therefore I will punish you**). If Israel thought that their standing as a specially chosen nation made them *less* responsible before God, they were tragically mistaken.

i. "The false deduction which is too often made is that if we are the privileged people of God, *therefore* we may look for His mercy, He will not punish us. That is not so. The measure of our privilege, in the Divine economy, is the measure of our responsibility. Therefore if we fail to fulfill that responsibility He will not pass over our sins, but rather will visit upon us all our iniquities. It is well that those nations who boast of the Divine favour, should lay this lesson to heart."  
(Morgan)

## 2. (3-6) *The inescapable logic of God's judgment.*

**Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**

**Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?**

**Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?**

**Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no trap for it?**

**Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?**

**If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?**

**If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?**

a. **Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?**

In this section, Amos connected six statements that were obviously true. The six statements of the obvious lead into a seventh statement, each one reinforcing this final point.

b. **If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done it?** When judgment comes against the cities of Israel, everyone should know that it was the **LORD** who has **done it**. It won't be an accident, fate, or bad luck. It will be the hand of the LORD.

3. (7-8) *The inevitable message of the prophet.*

**Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,  
Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.**

**A lion has roared!**

**Who will not fear?**

**The Lord GOD has spoken!**

**Who can but prophesy?**

a. **Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret:** In context, Amos spoke of the coming judgment upon Israel. God revealed this **secret** to His prophets, and it was prophesied for years and years before it happened so Israel would have every opportunity to repent.

i. God especially reveals the secrets of His coming judgment, so that men will have time to repent and no reason to be surprised. "Such *secrets* of God are revealed to them, that they may inform the people; that, by repentance and conversion, they may avoid the evil, and, by walking closely with God, secure the continuance of his favour" (Clarke).

ii. We must remember the context of the prophet Amos and understand that this *does not* mean that God does nothing without revealing it to a prophet first. In Eph 3:5 Paul described how God deliberately hid the nature of the church (being a new body, not Israel and not Gentile) from Old Testament prophets. This is one example of something that God didn't

announce or explain until it happened, without giving a prior revelation to a prophet.

b. **A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?** Amos is saying, "Don't blame me. I'm only the messenger." As natural as it is for a man to **fear** when a lion roars, that is how natural it is for the prophet to **prophesy** when the **Lord GOD has spoken**.

4. (9-10) *The message of judgment against Israel goes to the surrounding nations.*

**"Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod,  
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:  
'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;  
See great tumults in her midst,  
And the oppressed within her.  
For they do not know to do right,'  
Says the LORD,  
'Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.'"**

a. **Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt:** The city of **Ashdod** was a leading city of the Philistines. God invited the nations – represented here by Philista and Egypt – to come to **Samaria** (the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel) and to see their sin (**great tumults in her midst, and the oppressed within her**).

i. Hubbard on the choice of the Egyptians and Philistines as witnesses: "Their reputations for injustice and brutality would be resented by the Israelites, who would consider themselves in every way morally superior to those whom God had summoned as witnesses." It would also "show that covenant law is not the only criterion for testing Israel's behaviour but that by any standards of international decency they have become culprits."



b. **Who store up violence and robbery in their palaces:** The rich and powerful of Israel used their wealth and power to oppress and steal from others. God invited the nations to see the sin of Israel, so they could understand the judgment He would bring upon Israel.

**B. The destruction God's judgment brings.**

*1. (11-12) Israel will be conquered and exiled.*

**Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:**

**"An adversary *shall be* all around the land;  
He shall sap your strength from you,  
And your palaces shall be plundered."**

**Thus says the LORD:**

**"As a shepherd takes from the mouth of a lion  
Two legs or a piece of an ear,  
So shall the children of Israel be taken out  
Who dwell in Samaria—**

**In the corner of a bed and on the edge of a couch!"**

a. **An adversary shall be all around the land:** This was fulfilled in the Assyrian invasion of Israel, less than 30 years after Amos made this prophecy. For ten years, Israel was a subject state in the Assyrian Empire.

b. **As a shepherd takes from the mouth of the lion:** Exo 22:10-13 says that if an animal dies in the care of another man – such as a shepherd – that the shepherd must make restitution to the owner of the animal, *unless* he could bring remains that proved the animal was attacked by a predator.

i. "Amos' comparison, then, makes the sarcastic point that when invasion strikes Israel's devastation will be so complete that all that will be rescued is proof of death in the form of scraps of furniture." (Hubbard)

c. **So shall the children of Israel be taken out who dwell in Samaria:** This was fulfilled in the Assyrian exile

of Israel, less than 40 years after Amos made this prophecy. After a little more than ten years as a subject state in the Assyrian Empire, Israel was completely conquered by Assyria and the people of Israel were taken from their land and scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire.

*2. (13-15) Judgment on wicked places.*

**"Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,"  
Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,  
"That in the day I punish Israel for their  
transgressions,  
I will also visit *destruction* on the altars of Bethel;  
And the horns of the altar shall be cut off  
And fall to the ground.  
I will destroy the winter house along with the  
summer house;  
The houses of ivory shall perish,  
And the great houses shall have an end,"  
Says the LORD.**

a. **I will also visit destruction on the altars of Bethel; and the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground:** The altars of dedication to idols would be destroyed by God's judgment. When we build a place of idolatry, we invite God to destroy it. The **horns of the altar** at each corner and were thought to represent the strength of the altar, just as horns represent the strength of an animal.

b. **The great houses shall have an end:** God's judgment would not stop at places of idol worship; it would also extend to places built and enjoyed through oppression and robbery.

i. In the age prior to Jeroboam II, the houses in Israel's cities were roughly the same size. But archaeologists find a change starting in the eighth

century B.C. – ancient cities like Tirzah have a neighborhood of large, expensive houses and another neighborhood of small, crowded structures, smaller than the houses from previous years. The larger houses are filled with the marks of prosperity, and the oppressive rich of Israel thought they could find safety there – but God's judgment came against those houses as well, just as Amos promised.

**Amo 4:1** Listen to this, you women of Samaria, who grow fat like the well-fed cows of Bashan, who mistreat the weak, oppress the poor, and demand that your husbands keep you supplied with liquor!

Amo 4:2 As the Sovereign LORD is holy, he has promised, "The days will come when they will drag you away with hooks; every one of you will be like a fish on a hook.

Amo 4:3 You will be dragged to the nearest break in the wall and thrown out."

Amo 4:4 The Sovereign LORD says, "People of Israel, go to the holy place in Bethel and sin, if you must! Go to Gilgal and sin with all your might! Go ahead and bring animals to be sacrificed morning after morning, and bring your tithes every third day.

Amo 4:5 Go on and offer your bread in thanksgiving to God, and brag about the extra offerings you bring! This is the kind of thing you love to do.

### **Israel Has Not Returned to the Lord**

Amo 4:6 "I was the one who brought famine to all your cities, yet you did not come back to me.

Amo 4:7 I kept it from raining when your crops needed it most. I sent rain on one city, but not on another. Rain fell on one field, but another field dried up.

Amo 4:8 Weak with thirst, the people of several cities went to a city where they hoped to find water, but there was not

enough to drink. Still you did not come back to me.

Amo 4:9 "I sent a scorching wind to dry up your crops. The locusts ate up all your gardens and vineyards, your fig trees and olive trees. Still you did not come back to me.

Amo 4:10 "I sent a plague on you like the one I sent on Egypt. I killed your young men in battle and took your horses away. I filled your nostrils with the stink of dead bodies in your camps. Still you did not come back to me.

Amo 4:11 "I destroyed some of you as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Those of you who survived were like a burning stick saved from a fire. Still you did not come back to me," says the LORD.

Amo 4:12 "So then, people of Israel, I am going to punish you. And because I am going to do this, get ready to face my judgment!"

Amo 4:13 God is the one who made the mountains and created the winds. He makes his thoughts known to people; he changes day into night. He walks on the heights of the earth. This is his name: the LORD God Almighty!

## **Amos 4:1-13**

### **Amos 4 – “Yet You Have Not Returned to Me”**

#### **A. The sinful women of Israel.**

*1. (1) Amos describes the indulgent women of Israel.*

**Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria,  
Who oppress the poor,  
Who crush the needy,  
Who say to your husbands,  
“Bring wine, let us drink!”**

a. **You cows of Bashan:** Amos wasn't trained as a prophet, he was a simple herdsman and farmer. When he wanted to get the point across to the indulgent

women of Israel, he called them *fat cows*. The area of **Bashan** – in the northern part of Israel, the modern-day Golan Heights – was known for producing fat and healthy livestock.

i. Psa 22:12 mentions the *strong bulls of Bashan*; Eze 39:18 mentions the large livestock, the *fatlings of Bashan*. It's no exaggeration to say that Amos calls these women "fat cows." Though it is true that the very skinny ideal of female beauty is a modern phenomenon and especially in ancient times plumpness was a valued sign of affluence, we can count on it that at no time in human history has a woman appreciated being called a *fat cow*.

ii. "The sarcastic epithet *cows of Bashan* seems to refer both to the luxury that the wealthy women enjoyed and to a certain voluptuousness and sensuality which their extravagant life-style afforded them." (Hubbard)

iii. "The prophet here represents the iniquitous, opulent, idle, lazy drones, whether men or women, under the idea of fatted bullocks, which were shortly to be led out to the slaughter." (Clarke)

**b. Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy:** It wasn't that these women were plump and affluent; it was that they gained their wealth and affluence by oppressing and crushing the less fortunate. God saw this and promised to hold them to account.

i. "These women may not have been directly involved in mistreating the poor. But their incessant demands for luxuries drove their husbands to greater injustices." (McComiskey)

ii. "David complains of the strong bulls of Bashan (Psa 22:12), but those he might better deal with

than these cursed cows of Bashan." (Trapp)

c. **Who say to your husbands, "Bring wine, let us drink"**: It wasn't that these women were plump and affluent; it was that they used their affluence in the pure, self-focused pursuit of pleasure. God saw this and promised to hold them to account.

2. (2-3) *God's promise of judgment against the women of Israel.*

**The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:  
"Behold, the days shall come upon you  
When He will take you away with fishhooks,  
And your posterity with fishhooks.  
You will go out *through* broken walls,  
Each one straight ahead of her,  
And you will be cast into Harmon,"  
Says the LORD.**

a. **The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness**: This is an exceedingly solemn and sure oath. God's **holiness** is core to His very being, and so here God swore by His own existence.

i. "When he swore by his holiness in Amo 4:2, he guaranteed that the judgment would become a reality, because the holy God does not lie, nor can his holiness allow sin to go unpunished." (McComiskey)

b. **He will take you away with fishhooks**: God told unrepentant Israel of their coming agony when they would be conquered and exiled by the Assyrians. When the Assyrians depopulated and exiled a conquered community, they led the captives away on journeys of hundreds of miles, with the captives naked and attached together with a system of strings and **fishhooks** pierced through their lower lip. God would make sure they were led in this humiliating manner **through** the **broken**

**walls** of their conquered cities. This would thoroughly humble the *fat cows* of Israel.

## **B. God's answer to Israel's vain sacrifices.**

1. (4-5) *The vain sacrifices of Israel.*

**"Come to Bethel and transgress,  
At Gilgal multiply transgression;  
Bring your sacrifices every morning,  
Your tithes every three days.  
Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,  
Proclaim *and* announce the freewill offerings;  
For this you love,  
You children of Israel!"  
Says the Lord GOD.**

a. **Come to Bethel and transgress:** Because the kings of Israel did not want their people to go to the southern kingdom of Judah and sacrifice at Jerusalem, they set up rival centers of worship in cities like **Bethel** and **Gilgal**. They offered sacrifices at these places – supposedly to the LORD – but because the offering wasn't made in obedience to God, it was only a **transgression**.

i. **Your tithes every three days:** There was a tithe that was to be brought every three years (Deu 14:28). Amos says, even if you were to bring **your tithes every three days** it would not matter, because it only be an outward show.

b. **Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven:** Only one offering in Israel included **leaven**, the wave offering made on the Day of Pentecost. Here the prophet either refers to this one offering, or to mock their corrupt sacrifices, he suggested they brought offerings polluted by **leaven**.

c. **For this you love:** The children of Israel *loved* their corrupted worship. It was disobedient both in heart and

action, but they *loved* it. It's always wrong to measure worship by how it pleases *us*, because it is possible for corrupt and disobedient worship to be "wonderfully" pleasing.

i. Of course, we don't want to get into the thinking that worship must hurt or be unpleasant to be holy and acceptable. That isn't the point. The point is that we don't *first* measure worship by how it makes us feel, we measure it by how it honors God.

2. (6-8) *God withholds rain from idolatrous Israel.*

**"Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities.  
And lack of bread in all your places;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,"  
Says the LORD.**

**"I also withheld rain from you,  
When there were still three months to the harvest.  
I made it rain on one city,  
I withheld rain from another city.  
One part was rained upon,  
And where it did not rain the part withered.  
So two or three cities wandered to another city to  
drink water,  
But they were not satisfied;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,"  
Says the LORD."**

a. **I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities:**  
Because Israel seems to have enjoyed financial prosperity when Amos preached, this was probably set in the "prophetic present" – future events spoken of in the present tense. God would so humble prosperous Israel that their clean teeth would not be made "dirty" by food, because there would be no food to eat in the drought God will send.



**b. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city:** God made the provision of rain so specific, they would know it was from His hand. Yet the message did not get through to them.

i. "To prove to them that this rain did not come *fortuitously* or of *necessity*, God was pleased to make these *most evident distinctions*. One city had rain, and could fill all its tanks or cisterns, while a neighbouring city had none... in these instances a *particular providence* was most evident." (Clarke)

**c. Yet you have not returned to Me:** This was the greatest tragedy. Anyone can stumble into sin and feel the correcting hand of God, but we are in far greater trouble when we feel God's correction and still will not return to Him.

3. (9-11) *Further judgment on idolatrous Israel.*

**"I blasted you with blight and mildew.**

**When your gardens increased,**

**Your vineyards,**

**Your fig trees,**

**And your olive trees,**

**The locust devoured them;**

**Yet you have not returned to Me,"**

**Says the LORD.**

**"I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt;**

**Your young men I killed with a sword,**

**Along with your captive horses;**

**I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils;**

**Yet you have not returned to Me,"**

**Says the LORD.**

**"I overthrew some of you,**

**As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,**

**And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;  
Yet you have not returned to Me,"  
Says the LORD.**

**a. I blasted you... the locust devoured... I sent among you a plague... I made the stench of your camps come up:** Because Israel would not listen to the chastisement of the LORD, His hand grew more and more heavy upon them.

i. This wasn't a demonstration of God's anger, but of His *love*. He starts His chastisement slow and increases it incrementally, so that God can use the smallest amount of discipline necessary to turn our hearts back to Him. If we will not turn back the hand of chastisement grows heavier and heavier, out of loving desire to see our repentance.

ii. "*Blight* is the work of the east wind that dries and scorches the grain prematurely so that it turns brown. *Mildew* is the product of parasitic worms which turn pale the tips of green grain." (Hubbard)

**b. You were like a firebrand plucked from the burning; yet you have not returned to Me:** God saw Israel as a glowing ember **plucked** from the fires of judgment, like the same judgment that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though God spared them, they did not respond in gratitude – they **have not returned to God**.

*4. (12-13) God vows to perform what He has promised.*

**"Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;  
Because I will do this to you,  
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"  
For behold, He who forms mountains,  
And creates the wind,**

**Who declares to man what his thought is,  
And makes the morning darkness,  
Who treads the high places of the earth;  
The LORD God of hosts is His name.**

a. **Prepare to meet your God:** This was a sober warning, appropriate for all men at all times, because we never know when we will **meet our God** in eternity. Because we don't know when, we must always be prepared **to meet** our God – but this is *especially* true for those facing the judgment of God.

i. We can apply this text in three ways:

- **Prepare to meet your God** as a *challenge*.
- **Prepare to meet your God** as an *invitation*.
- **Prepare to meet your God** as a *summons*.

ii. As a *challenge*, God invites His enemies to **prepare to meet** Him. A boxer prepares long and hard before stepping into the ring against a champion. If you are going to step into the ring with God, you had better prepare! "The prophet may be understood as in irony challenging the proud rebels to meet in arms the God whom they have despised. Let them prepare to fight it out with him whom they have made to be their enemy, and against whose laws they have so continually revolted" (Spurgeon).

iii. As an *invitation*, this is a blessing. The summons, "**Prepare to meet your God**" was nothing but a *blessing* to Adam. Ever since the fall it is our nature to hide from God, so the call "**Prepare to meet your God**" has a different sense entirely. Still, if we will come to God we must **prepare** ourselves.

iv. As a *summons*, we recognize that one day all will stand before God and give account. "Think awhile upon who it is that you have to meet! You must

meet, your God – your God! That is, offended justice you must meet whose laws you have broken, whose penalties you have ridiculed; justice righteously indignant with its sword drawn you must confront. You must meet your God; that is, you must be examined, by unblinded omniscience. He who has seen your heart, and read your thoughts, and jotted down your affections, and remembered your idle words, you must meet him; and infinite discernment you must meet; those eyes that never yet were duped; the God who will see through the veils of hypocrisy and all the concealments of formality. There will be no making yourself out to be better than you are before him” (Spurgeon).

b. **The LORD God of hosts is His name:** God emphasized the point by emphasizing Who it is that makes the point, a God we should never trifle with.

- He is the God of all creation (**He who forms mountains, and creates the wind**).
- He is the God who is absolutely sovereign over man (**who declares to man what his thought is**).
- He is the God with all power over nature (**and makes the morning darkness**) .
- He is the God who rules above all (**who treads the high places of the earth**).

### **Seek the Lord and Live**

**Amo 5:1** Listen, people of Israel, to this funeral song which I sing over you:

Amo 5:2 Virgin Israel has fallen, Never to rise again! She lies abandoned on the ground, And no one helps her up.

Amo 5:3 The Sovereign LORD says, "A city in Israel sends out a thousand soldiers, but only a hundred return; another city sends out a hundred, but only ten come back."

Amo 5:4 The LORD says to the people of Israel, "Come to me, and you will live.

Amo 5:5 Do not go to Beersheba to worship. Do not try to find me at Bethel—Bethel will come to nothing. Do not go to Gilgal—her people are doomed to exile."

Amo 5:6 Go to the LORD, and you will live. If you do not go, he will sweep down like fire on the people of Israel. The fire will burn up the people of Bethel, and no one will be able to put it out.

Amo 5:7 You are doomed, you that twist justice and cheat people out of their rights!

Amo 5:8 The LORD made the stars, the Pleiades and Orion. He turns darkness into daylight and day into night. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is the LORD.

Amo 5:9 He brings destruction on the mighty and their strongholds.

Amo 5:10 You people hate anyone who challenges injustice and speaks the whole truth in court.

Amo 5:11 You have oppressed the poor and robbed them of their grain. And so you will not live in the fine stone houses you build or drink wine from the beautiful vineyards you plant.

Amo 5:12 I know how terrible your sins are and how many crimes you have committed. You persecute good people, take bribes, and prevent the poor from getting justice in the courts.

Amo 5:13 And so, keeping quiet in such evil times is the smart thing to do!

Amo 5:14 Make it your aim to do what is right, not what is evil, so that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty really will be with you, as you claim he is.

Amo 5:15 Hate what is evil, love what is right, and see that justice prevails in the courts. Perhaps the LORD will be

merciful to the people of this nation who are still left alive.

Amo 5:16 And so the Sovereign LORD Almighty says, "There will be wailing and cries of sorrow in the city streets. Even farmers will be called to mourn the dead along with those who are paid to mourn.

Amo 5:17 There will be wailing in all the vineyards. All this will take place because I am coming to punish you." The LORD has spoken.

### **Let Justice Roll Down**

Amo 5:18 How terrible it will be for you who long for the day of the LORD! What good will that day do you? For you it will be a day of darkness and not of light.

Amo 5:19 It will be like someone who runs from a lion and meets a bear! Or like someone who comes home and puts his hand on the wall—only to be bitten by a snake!

Amo 5:20 The day of the LORD will bring darkness and not light; it will be a day of gloom, without any brightness.

Amo 5:21 The LORD says, "I hate your religious festivals; I cannot stand them!

Amo 5:22 When you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; I will not accept the animals you have fattened to bring me as offerings.

Amo 5:23 Stop your noisy songs; I do not want to listen to your harps.

Amo 5:24 Instead, let justice flow like a stream, and righteousness like a river that never goes dry.

Amo 5:25 "People of Israel, I did not demand sacrifices and offerings during those forty years that I led you through the desert.

Amo 5:26 But now, because you have worshiped images of Sakkuth, your king god, and of Kaiwan, your star god, you will have to carry those images

Amo 5:27 when I take you into exile in a land beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is Almighty God.

## **Amos 5:1-27**

### **Amos 5 – The Offerings God Hates**

#### **A. Seek the LORD in a time of impending judgment.**

*1. (1-3) Coming exile and captivity.*

**Hear this word which I take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:**

**The virgin of Israel has fallen;**

**She will rise no more.**

**She lies forsaken on her land;**

**There is no one to raise her up.**

**For thus says the Lord GOD:**

**"The city that goes out by a thousand**

**Shall have a hundred left,**

**And that which goes out by a hundred**

**Shall have ten left to the house of Israel."**

a. **The virgin of Israel has fallen:** Amos saw Israel as a tragic young woman who was **fallen** and **forsaken**, with no one coming to her aid. In her rebellion against God, Israel was as helpless as a young woman among violent men.

i. **Virgin** "depicts the vulnerability of Israel and the special sadness that accompanies her death, as though she should have had a whole life to live and fruitfulness before her" (Hubbard).

b. **The city that goes out by a thousand shall have a hundred left:** Amos predicted that things would become so bad for Israel that when the enemy came, a city that would have before sent out **a thousand** soldiers would only send out **a hundred**.

- i. "Only a handful of ragged, war-weary men will be left of Israel's proud army." (McComiskey)

2. (4-9) *An invitation to seek the LORD.*

**For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:**

**"Seek Me and live;**

**But do not seek Bethel,**

**Nor enter Gilgal,**

**Nor pass over to Beersheba;**

**For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,**

**And Bethel shall come to nothing.**

**Seek the LORD and live,**

**Lest He break out like fire in the house of Joseph,**

**And devour *it*,**

**With no one to quench *it* in Bethel;**

**You who turn justice to wormwood,**

**And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"**

**He made the Pleiades and Orion;**

**He turns the shadow of death into morning**

**And makes the day dark as night;**

**He calls for the waters of the sea**

**And pours them out on the face of the earth;**

**The LORD *is* His name.**

**He rains ruin upon the strong,**

**So that fury comes upon the fortress.**

- a. **Seek Me and live:** When Israel was ripe for judgment, the key to survival was to simply **seek** the LORD. However, they could not **seek** the LORD unless they first would **not seek** places of disobedience and self-will (exemplified by **Bethel** and **Gilgal** and other rival centers of worship).

- i. **Bethel, Gilgal, and Beersheba** were once places associated with great privilege and spiritual heritage. Now they were places of *vain, empty worship*.



- **Bethel** was the place where God met Jacob (Gen 28:11-19, Gen 35:1-7).

- **Gilgal** was the place where Israel's spiritual reproach was rolled away in the days of Joshua (Jos 5:1-12).

- **Beersheba** was connected to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 21:22-33; Gen 26:23-33; Gen 46:1-5).

- ii. There is a play on words in the phrase **for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nothing**. It doesn't come across in the English translation, but in Hebrew it is a clever pun.

b. **You who turn justice to wormwood, and lay righteousness to rest:** Amos again confronted the corrupt legal system of Israel. **Justice** had been thoroughly spoiled, and **righteousness** was as good as dead.

c. **He made the Pleiades and Orion:** Amos explained *why* God was worthy to be sought, and *why* He could deliver Israel from their coming doom. He could do it because He is the God mighty enough and wise enough to make and uphold the starry constellations in the sky, and to manage the creation.

- i. This means that God is strong enough to save, but also plenty strong enough to bring judgment (**He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress**). If the **strong** and the **fortress** can't stand before God's power, no one can.

3. (10-15) *The cause, the curse, and the cure.*

**They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,  
And they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.  
Therefore, because you tread down the poor  
And take grain taxes from him,  
Though you have built houses of hewn stone,**

Yet you shall not dwell in them;  
You have planted pleasant vineyards,  
But you shall not drink wine from them.  
For I know your manifold transgressions  
And your mighty sins:  
Afflicting the just *and* taking bribes;  
Diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate.  
Therefore the prudent keep silent at that time,  
For it is an evil time.  
Seek good and not evil,  
That you may live;  
So the LORD God of hosts will be with you,  
As you have spoken.  
Hate evil, love good;  
Establish justice in the gate.  
It may be that the LORD God of hosts  
Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

a. **They hate the one who rebukes in the gate:** Amos told us the *cause* of coming judgment – the terrible way that the people of Israel treated one another, especially how the strong took advantage of the weak. The weak had no voice **in the gate** and was robbed by oppressive **taxes**. The rich took advantage with **bribes** and paid off the system so they could drive **the poor from justice**.

i. The **gate** was the law-court in ancient cities. Israel's courts were so corrupt that they silenced the poor and righteous. The effect of this culture of injustice was that **the prudent keep silent at that time, for it is an evil time** – godly and righteous people did not speak out either fearing retribution or knowing it would do no good.

ii. "Judicial decisions for each community were taken at the gate of the city, where the heads of families and other elders assembled to hear witnesses,

arbitrate disputes, decide controversies and generally dispense justice. The space on the inner side of the gate together with rooms or alcoves in the gate area itself were used as courtrooms.” (Hubbard)

**b. Though you have built houses of hewn stone, yet you shall not dwell in them:** Amos told us God’s *curse* for Israel’s wickedness. Though the wicked in Israel gained fancy **houses** and **vineyards** from their oppression of the poor and railroading of justice, the gains were only temporary. God would evict them from their dishonestly gained **houses** and **vineyards**.

**c. Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you:** Amos proclaimed God’s *cure* for Israel’s sin. They must begin to simply **seek good and not evil**. They must transform their corrupt courts and **establish justice in the gates**.

## **B. Wailing and woe upon Israel.**

*1. (16-20) Wailing and woe in the day of the LORD.*

**Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this:**

**“*There shall* be wailing in all streets,  
And they shall say in all the highways,  
'Alas! Alas!'**

**They shall call the farmer to mourning,  
And skillful lamenters to wailing.**

**In all vineyards *there shall* be wailing,  
For I will pass through you,”**

**Says the LORD.**

**Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!  
For what good is the day of the LORD to you?  
It *will be* darkness, and not light.**

**It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion,  
And a bear met him!**

**Or as *though* he went into the house,  
Leaned his hand on the wall,**

**And a serpent bit him!**

**Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light?**

**Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?**

a. **They shall call the farmer to mourning, and skillful lamenters to wailing:** This referred to the Jewish practice of hiring professional mourners to wail at a funeral. Amos described judgment so widespread that there would be a shortage of **skillful lamenters**, so they would have to hire **the farmer to mourning**.

i. Because the Prophet Amos as a farmer, he often related the judgments of God to how they affect the farmers of Israel.

b. **For what good is the day of the LORD to you? It will be darkness, and not light:** In their religious ritualism, the people of Israel still claimed they longed for **the day of the LORD**. Amos rightly warned them that they don't know what they asked for because **the day of the LORD** would bring them judgment, not mercy. They would end up worse off than before; it **will be as though a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him!**

i. "The illustrative parable makes it clear that darkness and light do not speak here of wickedness and righteousness but of disaster and safety." (Hubbard)

*2. (21-27) Israel's religious ceremonies will not save them from the wailing and woe to come.*

**"I hate, I despise your feast days,**

**And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.**

**Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,**

**I will not accept *them*,**

**Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.**

**Take away from Me the noise of your songs,**

**For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.**

**But let justice run down like water,  
And righteousness like a mighty stream.**

**Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings  
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?**

**You also carried Sikkuth your king  
And Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods,  
Which you made for yourselves.**

**Therefore I will send you into captivity beyond  
Damascus,"**

**Says the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.**

a. **I hate, I despise your feast days:** This would have amazed – and offended – those in Israel who heard Amos say this. They told themselves that they were really honoring God and pleasing Him by their observance of the **feasts** and **sacred assemblies**, but God was offended by their religious ceremonialism, disconnected from the heart and justice towards one another.

i. Amos expressed the same idea Jesus did in Mat 5:23-24 : *Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.* God thought all that Israel did – their **feast days**, their **sacred assemblies**, their **burnt offerings**, their **grain offerings**, their **peace offerings**, and their **songs** – all this was nothing as long as there was no **justice** or **righteousness** in their dealings with others.

b. **Let justice run down like water, and  
righteousness like a mighty stream:** It is easy to

separate our religious ceremonies from the way we treat others, and to think that God should be happy if we give Him “His due” without regard to **justice** and **righteousness** towards others. God won’t have it. He says, “Keep your annoying religious ceremonies, and

**let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”**

i. “A momentary flow of justice and righteousness will not do; these virtues are to keep on in the social order like a stream that does not dry up with summer heat.” (McComiskey)

c. **You also carried Sikkuth your king and Chiun, your idols, the star of your gods, which you made for yourselves:** Apparently, these were pagan deities Israel brought with them from Egypt into the Promised Land. God reminded Israel that though they sacrificed to Him in the wilderness, they also hung on to their idolatry. It didn’t please Him then and it doesn’t please Him now.

i. The NIV translates **Sikkuth** and **Chiun** as *shrine* and *pedestal*. It’s simply a difficult passage to translate. The Septuagint has *Moloch* for **Sikkuth** and *Rephan* (an Egyptian deity related to the planet Saturn) for **Chiun**.

d. **Therefore I will send you into captivity:** Israel’s extreme sin merited an extreme correction, nothing less than exile and **captivity**.

### **Woe to Those at Ease in Zion**

**Amo 6:1** How terrible it will be for you that have such an easy life in Zion and for you that feel safe in Samaria—you great leaders of this great nation Israel, you to whom the people go for help!

Amo 6:2 Go and look at the city of Calneh. Then go on to the great city of Hamath and on down to the Philistine city of Gath. Were they any better than the kingdoms of Judah and Israel? Was their territory larger than yours?

Amo 6:3 You refuse to admit that a day of disaster is coming, but what you do only brings that day closer.

Amo 6:4 How terrible it will be for you that stretch out on your luxurious couches, feasting on veal and lamb!

Amo 6:5 You like to compose songs, as David did, and play them on harps.

Amo 6:6 You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest perfumes, but you do not mourn over the ruin of Israel.

Amo 6:7 So you will be the first to go into exile. Your feasts and banquets will come to an end.

Amo 6:8 The Sovereign LORD Almighty has given this solemn warning: "I hate the pride of the people of Israel; I despise their luxurious mansions. I will give their capital city and everything in it to the enemy."

Amo 6:9 If there are ten men left in a family, they will die.

Amo 6:10 The dead man's relative, the one in charge of the funeral, will take the body out of the house. The relative will call to whoever is still left in the house, "Is anyone else there with you?" The person will answer, "No!" Then the relative will say, "Be quiet! We must be careful not even to mention the LORD's name."

Amo 6:11 When the LORD gives the command, houses large and small will be smashed to pieces.

Amo 6:12 Do horses gallop on rocks? Does anyone plow the sea with oxen? Yet you have turned justice into poison, and right into wrong.

Amo 6:13 You brag about capturing the town of Lodebar. You boast, "We were strong enough to take Karnaim."

Amo 6:14 The LORD God Almighty himself says, "People of Israel, I am going to send a foreign army to occupy your

country. It will oppress you from Hamath Pass in the north to the Brook of the Arabah in the south."

## **Amos 6:1-14**

### **Amos 6 – Woe to the Pride of Jacob**

#### **A. Woe to those who are at ease in Zion.**

*1. (1-2) Comparing Israel to her pagan neighbors.*

**Woe to you *who are at ease in Zion,*  
And trust in Mount Samaria,  
Notable persons in the chief nation,  
To whom the house of Israel comes!  
Go over to Calneh and see;  
And from there go to Hamath the great;  
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.  
*Are you better than these kingdoms?*  
**Or is their territory greater than your territory?****

a. **Woe to you who are at ease in Zion:** In her pride and indulgence, all Israel sought was **ease**. This indulgent lust for comfort and luxury is a sin, and God promised to judge Israel for it.

i. The idea of rest isn't all bad. Jesus wants to give us rest (Mat 11:28-29). There is a rest waiting for the people of God (Heb 4:9-11). There is rest for us in heaven (Rev 4:9-11). Then there is another kind of rest, a sinful kind of rest – connected to indifference, laziness, and indulgence.

ii. Yet the prophet Amos spoke of "a carnal ease, a fleshly security, it is not the confidence of a man who is pardoned, but the ease of a hardened wretch who has learned to despise the gibbet. It is not the assurance of one who is on the rock, but the ease of a senseless drunkard, whose house is tottering from its sandy foundations, and yet he riots at full speed; it



is not the calm of soul at peace with God, but the ease of a madman, who, because he has hidden his sin from his own eyes, thinks he has concealed it from God. It is the ease and peace of one who has grown callous, hardened, brutalized, stupid, sullen, and careless, who has begun a sleep which God grant may soon be broken, or else it will surely bring him where he shall make his bed in hell" (Spurgeon).

iii. How did this sinful **ease** of God's people show itself?

- Israel's sinful ease was shown in *presumption*, because she trusted in the might of Mount Samaria.
- Israel's sinful ease was shown in *procrastination*, because she *put far off the day of doom*.
- Israel's sinful ease was shown in *cruelty to men*, because she caused *the seat of violence to come near*.
- Israel's sinful ease was shown in *love of self*, through all the self-indulgence described in Amo 6:4-6.
- Israel's sinful ease was shown in *carelessness*, in the willful, drunken ignorance of Amo 6:6.

iv. "Self-indulgence! Oh, this is the God of many! They live not for Christ – What do they for him? They live not for his Church – What care they for that? They live for self, and for self only. And mark there are such among the poor as well as among the rich, for all classes have this evil leaven." (Spurgeon)

v. King David had an ungodly ease when he stayed behind when it was time for kings to go out to war – and he slipped into sin with Bathsheba, eventually murdering her husband to cover up his immorality (2 Samuel 11).

b. **Are you better than these kingdoms?** God wanted to rebuke the pride of Israel by making them compare themselves to some of their pagan neighbors. Perhaps they weren't so great after all. These cities may have already suffered the judgment of God, and God wanted Israel to know they would be next because they were no better.

2. (3-7) *The high-standing in Israel will be brought low.*

**Woe to you who put far off the day of doom,  
Who cause the seat of violence to come near;  
Who lie on beds of ivory,  
Stretch out on your couches,  
Eat lambs from the flock  
And calves from the midst of the stall;  
Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments,  
And invent for yourselves musical instruments like  
David;  
Who drink wine from bowls,  
And anoint yourselves with the best ointments,  
But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.  
Therefore they shall now go captive as the first of the  
captives,  
And those who recline at banquets shall be removed.**

a. **Woe to you who put far off the day of doom... who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments... who drink wine from bowls... but are not grieved:** Amos prophesied during a time of economic prosperity in Israel, and the successful in Israel used that prosperity for pure self-indulgence. When God makes us prosperous, we have an absolute obligation to use what He gives us in a way that glorifies Him, not pampers ourselves.

b. **Therefore they shall now go captive as first of the captives:** God warned the leading men of Israel

that they would lead in the train of **captives** when the Assyrians conquered Israel.

## **B. The coming destruction of Israel.**

*1. (8-11) The city delivered to destruction.*

**The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself,  
The LORD God of hosts says:**

**"I abhor the pride of Jacob,  
And hate his palaces;  
Therefore I will deliver up the city  
And all that is in it."**

**Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. And when a relative *of the dead*, with one who will burn the bodies, picks up *the bodies* to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "*Are there any more with you?*" Then someone will say, "None." And he will say, "Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD."**

**For behold, the LORD gives a command:  
He will break the great house into bits,  
And the little house into pieces.**

a. **I abhor the pride of Jacob:** As much as their sinful conduct, God hated the **pride of Jacob**. In their season of prosperity and success they lifted their hearts high in pride, and God will send a destroying army to bring them low.

i. This principle is so important to the LORD that He repeats it three times: *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (1Pe 5:5, Jas 4:6, Pro 3:34).

b. **Hold your tongue! For we dare not mention the name of the LORD:** The people would be so terrified at

the judgment of God that they would fear to hear even the name of the LORD mentioned.

i. "When a relative of one of the dead comes to burn the corpses, should he find one person still alive, that person will not permit his mentioning the name of the Lord for fear that the Lord will turn his wrath on him."  
(McComiskey)

2. (12-14) *The injustice and pride of Israel make it a target of judgment.*

**Do horses run on rocks?**

**Does *one* plow *there* with oxen?**

**Yet you have turned justice into gall,**

**And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,**

**You who rejoice over Lo Debar,**

**Who say, "Have we not taken Karnaim for ourselves**

**By our own strength?"**

**"But, behold, I will raise up a nation against you,**

**O house of Israel,"**

**Says the LORD God of hosts;**

**"And they will afflict you from the entrance of Hamath**

**To the Valley of the Arabah."**

a. **Do horses run on rocks?** You can't expect a good result if you run a horse over rough rocks, because the horse will be injured. In the same way, Israel could not expect a good result when they turned **justice into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.**

i. Here, Amos "puts together two proverbs which were commonly used to signify that men do not, as a rule, continue to labor in vain, and spend their strength for nought. Wise men do not send their horses to run upon the rocks; and they do not send their oxen to plough where all their toil would be wasted: 'Shall horses run upon the rock?' 'Will one plough rocks with

oxen?' The answer implied is, 'Certainly not,' and it meant that, if a thing cannot be done, it is not worth doing if it can, it will be well for us not to attempt to do it" (Spurgeon).

**b. I will raise up a nation against you, O house of Israel:** Amos came back to this constant theme – because of Israel's great and deep sin, judgment would come to them through a conquering nation.

i. "The Lord points to other cities which had been destroyed, – to Calneh, and Hamath, and Gath, which he had smitten because of the sin of the people who had lived there; and he says, 'Ye that dwell at Jerusalem, and ye that live at Samaria, do not imagine that ye will escape the consequences of your sin. I was able to reach the inhabitants of these proud cities, despite their strong fortifications and their powerful armies; and I can reach you also.' So, when we look back upon the judgments of God upon guilty men, we may conclude that no sinner has any right to think that he shall escape. The proudest and mightiest have been brought down by God and so will men, will dare to resist the Most High, continue to be humble, even to the world's end." (Spurgeon)

## **Warning Visions**

**Amo 7:1** I had a vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw him create a swarm of locusts just after the king's share of the hay had been cut and the grass was starting to grow again.

Amo 7:2 In my vision I saw the locusts eat up every green thing in the land, and then I said, "Sovereign LORD, forgive your people! How can they survive? They are so small and weak!"

Amo 7:3 The LORD changed his mind and said, "What you saw will not take place."

Amo 7:4 I had another vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw him preparing to punish his people with fire. The fire burned up the great ocean under the earth and started to burn up the land.

Amo 7:5 Then I said, "Stop, O Sovereign LORD! How can your people survive? They are so small and weak!"

Amo 7:6 The LORD changed his mind again and said, "This will not take place either."

Amo 7:7 I had another vision from the LORD. In it I saw him standing beside a wall that had been built with the use of a plumb line, and there was a plumb line in his hand.

Amo 7:8 He asked me, "Amos, what do you see?" "A plumb line," I answered. Then he said, "I am using it to show that my people are like a wall that is out of line. I will not change my mind again about punishing them.

Amo 7:9 The places where Isaac's descendants worship will be destroyed. The holy places of Israel will be left in ruins. I will bring the dynasty of King Jeroboam to an end."

### **Amos Accused**

Amo 7:10 Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, then sent a report to King Jeroboam of Israel: "Amos is plotting against you among the people. His speeches will destroy the country.

Amo 7:11 This is what he says: 'Jeroboam will die in battle, and the people of Israel will be taken away from their land into exile.' "

Amo 7:12 Amaziah then said to Amos, "That's enough, prophet! Go on back to Judah and do your preaching there. Let *them* pay you for it.

Amo 7:13 Don't prophesy here at Bethel any more. This is the king's place of worship, the national temple."

Amo 7:14 Amos answered, "I am not the kind of prophet who prophesies for pay. I am a herdsman, and I take care of fig trees.

Amo 7:15 But the LORD took me from my work as a shepherd and ordered me to come and prophesy to his people Israel.

Amo 7:16 So now listen to what the LORD says. You tell me to stop prophesying, to stop raving against the people of Israel.

Amo 7:17 And so, Amaziah, the LORD says to you, 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your children will be killed in war. Your land will be divided up and given to others, and you yourself will die in a heathen country. And the people of Israel will certainly be taken away from their own land into exile.' "

## **Amos 7:1-17**

### **Amos 7 – Visions of Judgment and the Power of the Prophet's Prayer**

#### **A. Judgment seen in three visions.**

##### *1. (1-3) The vision of locusts.*

**Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop; indeed it was the late crop after the king's mowings. And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said:**

**"O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray!**

**Oh, that Jacob may stand,**

**For he is small!"**

**So the LORD relented concerning this.**

**"It shall not be," said the LORD.**

a. **Thus the Lord GOD showed me:** The prophet Amos will relate a vision from the LORD. This was something he *saw*, something the LORD **showed** him.

b. **He formed locust swarms at the beginning of the late crop:** Late in the harvest, Amos saw a swarm of

locusts coming to devour the crops of Israel. It came **after the king's mowings**, so the royal court already took their taxes. This left the Israelites with nothing at all.

i. "If the first cutting went to the court and the second crop to the locusts, Israel would be left destitute indeed." (Hubbard)

c. **Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!** At this vision of terrible judgment, the prophet's heart was moved with pity and compassion for Israel, and he asked God to consider Israel's frailty.

i. "Israel is called *Jacob*, a reminder that he was the smaller, younger one to Esau in Isaac's family; God had deliberately chosen him and therefore was obligated to stand by him in his helplessness." (Hubbard)

d. **So the LORD relented:** In response to the prophet's prayer, the **LORD relented**. This seems remarkably simple. What if Amos didn't pray or if he didn't pray with the same earnestness? We must believe that the LORD would *not* have **relented**.

i. This is another amazing example of how much rests upon prayer. We may debate endlessly how this incident reflects on the issues of predestination and human responsibility, but clearly we are left with the impression that the plague either came or was held back based on the prophet's prayer.

## *2. (4-6) The vision of fire.*

**Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, the Lord GOD called for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the territory. Then I said:**

**"O Lord GOD, cease, I pray!  
Oh, that Jacob may stand,**



**For he is small!"**

**So the LORD relented concerning this.**

**"This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.**

a. **The Lord GOD called for conflict by fire:** After the vision of locusts, now Amos saw a vision of a great consuming fire upon the land of Israel. In response, he did what he did before: he pled for mercy (**Oh, that Jacob may stand, for he is small!**).

b. **So the LORD relented concerning this:** As happened with the vision of locusts, God **relented** at the prayer of the prophet.

*3. (7-9) The vision of the plumb line.*

**Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said:**

**"Behold, I am setting a plumb line**

**In the midst of My people Israel;**

**I will not pass by them anymore.**

**The high places of Isaac shall be desolate,**

**And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste.**

**I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam."**

a. **I am setting a plumb line in the midst of My people Israel:** A **plumb line** measures if a wall is built straight. God held this measure against Israel, to see if they were straight against His standard.

i. **The high places of Isaac shall be desolate:**

"The references to *Isaac* are the only places in the Old Testament where *Isaac* stands for the nation of his descendants rather than for the patriarch himself. Amos seems to have in mind the special veneration for Isaac which the members of the Northern

Kingdom displayed . . . Amos may be announcing and lamenting the tragic break with the covenantal past” (Hubbard).

b. **I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam:** Because Israel was chronically crooked against the **plumb line** of God, Israel and her leadership would be judged **with the sword**.

## **B. Hearing from all sides.**

1. *(10-13) Amaziah’s words against Amos.*

**Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said:**

**‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword,  
And Israel shall surely be led away captive  
From their own land.’”**

**Then Amaziah said to Amos:**

**“Go, you seer!**

**Flee to the land of Judah.**

**There eat bread,**

**And there prophesy.**

**But never again prophesy at Bethel,**

**For it is the king’s sanctuary,**

**And it is the royal residence.”**

a. **Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel:** This **Amaziah** was a wicked man, because he was identified as a **priest of Bethel**, which was one of the centers of Israel’s idolatrous worship. He sent a message of **Jeroboam king of Israel**, who was a successful king by worldly standards, but a wicked king before God.

b. **Saying, “Amos has conspired against you”:** Amaziah implicated the prophet in a conspiracy to

undermine King Jeroboam and the people of Israel. He also said that the message of Amos was too hard (**the land is not able to bear all his words**).

c. **Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, and there prophesy:** Amaziah was offended that Amos came to Bethel and prophesied, so he did his best to send him back to Judah.

i. "Hireling priests of this kind have ever been the great enemies of the true prophets of God; and when they could bring no charge of false doctrine or immorality against them, have accused them of conspiring against the government; and because they have preached against *sin*, have held them up as exciting insurrection among the people." (Clarke)

2. (14-15) *The answer from Amos.*

**Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:**

**"I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet,**

**But I was a sheepbreeder**

**And a tender of sycamore fruit.**

**Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock,**

**And the LORD said to me,**

**Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'**

a. **I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet:**

Amos replied to Amaziah by noting that he was a reluctant, unprofessional prophet – only a farmer by trade. Amos was hardly the type to launch a conspiracy.

b. **Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock:**

Like many others in the Bible, God called Amos as he faithfully performed his present calling. It was because Amos was an honorable **sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit** that God made him an honorable prophet.

i. We see also that God used Amos as a **sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit**. With so many allusions and illustrations from the world of agriculture, Amos spoke as a farmer and God used it. "Every prophet has a manner and style peculiarly his own. Although God speaketh through them all, yet they lose not their individuality or originality of character. The breath which causes the music is the same, but no two of the instruments give forth precisely the same sound. It is true they all utter the words of God; but each voice has its own special cry, so that though God is pre-eminently seen, yet the man is not lost" (Spurgeon).

*3. (16-17) The answer from the LORD.*

**Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD:**

**"You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,  
And do not spout against the house of Isaac.'**

**Therefore thus says the LORD:**

**'Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;**

**Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;**

**Your land shall be divided by *survey* line;**

**You shall die in a defiled land;**

**And Israel shall surely be led away captive**

**From his own land.'"**

a. **Your wife shall be a harlot in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword:** God's word to Amaziah – through the prophet Amos, no less – was that the calamity he wanted to silence Amos about would certainly come upon him.

b. **And Israel shall surely be led away captive from his own land:** This was exactly what Amaziah accused Amos of saying as part of the so-called conspiracy. Amos was bold enough to speak for the LORD, and to tell Amaziah and everyone else that Israel's impending

captivity is indeed true. This was a difficult word in most difficult circumstances, but Amos was faithful to deliver it.

## **The Coming Day of Bitter Mourning**

**Amo 8:1** I had another vision from the Sovereign LORD. In it I saw a basket of fruit.

Amo 8:2 The LORD asked, "Amos, what do you see?" "A basket of fruit," I answered. The LORD said to me, "The end has come for my people Israel. I will not change my mind again about punishing them.

Amo 8:3 On that day the songs in the palace will become cries of mourning. There will be dead bodies everywhere. They will be cast out in silence."

Amo 8:4 Listen to this, you that trample on the needy and try to destroy the poor of the country.

Amo 8:5 You say to yourselves, "We can hardly wait for the holy days to be over so that we can sell our grain. When will the Sabbath end, so that we can start selling again? Then we can overcharge, use false measures, and fix the scales to cheat our customers.

Amo 8:6 We can sell worthless wheat at a high price. We'll find someone poor who can't pay his debts, not even the price of a pair of sandals, and we'll buy him as a slave."

Amo 8:7 The LORD, the God of Israel, has sworn, "I will never forget their evil deeds.

Amo 8:8 And so the earth will quake, and everyone in the land will be in distress. The whole country will be shaken; it will rise and fall like the Nile River.

Amo 8:9 The time is coming when I will make the sun go down at noon and the earth grow dark in daytime. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

Amo 8:10 I will turn your festivals into funerals and change your glad songs into cries of grief. I will make you shave

your heads and wear sackcloth, and you will be like parents mourning for their only child. That day will be bitter to the end.

Amo 8:11 "The time is coming when I will send famine on the land. People will be hungry, but not for bread; they will be thirsty, but not for water. They will hunger and thirst for a message from the LORD. I, the Sovereign LORD, have spoken.

Amo 8:12 People will wander from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean and then on around from the north to the east. They will look everywhere for a message from the LORD, but they will not find it.

Amo 8:13 On that day even healthy young men and women will collapse from thirst.

Amo 8:14 Those who swear by the idols of Samaria, who say, 'By the god of Dan' or 'By the god of Beersheba'—those people will fall and not rise again."

## **Amos 8:1-14**

### **Amos 8 – Like a Basket of Ripe Fruit**

#### **A. Rotting and corruption in Israel.**

*1. (1-3) The basket of summer fruit.*

**Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. And He said, "Amos, what do you see?" So I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me:**

**"The end has come upon My people Israel;  
I will not pass by them anymore.**

**And the songs of the temple  
Shall be wailing in that day,"**

**Says the Lord GOD—**

**"Many dead bodies everywhere,  
They shall be thrown out in silence."**

a. **A basket of summer fruit:** This was fruit that was *ripe*, and would not keep long. Just as the time is short for **summer fruit**, so the time was short for Israel.

i. In the original Hebrew, the prophet's point was far more emphatic because he uses\d a play on words that difficult to communicate in English. "The overt connection between the vision and Israel's fate was in the word-play based on the similar sounds [between **summer** and **end**]... The point of this vision, then, is the finality of judgment" (Hubbard).

ii. "So when Amos replies to the Lord that he sees a basket of ripe *qayis*, God replied "Qes!" An end is to come upon Israel." (Boice)

b. **The end has come upon My people Israel... Many dead bodies everywhere, they shall be thrown out in silence:** Ripe fruit is close to being **thrown out**, and a similar judgment will come upon rotten Israel.

2. (4-6) *Dishonesty and cheating the poor in Israel.*

**Hear this, you who swallow up the needy,  
And make the poor of the land fail,  
Saying:**

**"When will the New Moon be past,  
That we may sell grain?  
And the Sabbath,  
That we may trade wheat?  
Making the ephah small and the shekel large,  
Falsifying the scales by deceit,  
That we may buy the poor for silver,  
And the needy for a pair of sandals—  
Even sell the bad wheat?"**

a. **Who swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land fail:** Amos returned to his familiar theme of

justice, decrying those in Israel who made their money from the unjust treatment of the poor and vulnerable.

b. **When will the New Moon be past, that we may sell grain:** Israel *kept* the **New Moon** and **Sabbath**, but only outwardly. Inside, they rejected these special days appointed by God and they couldn't wait until they were over.

c. **Making the ephah small and the shekel large:** There was chronic corruption and cheating in the business world, and God saw it and was angry. When they sold wheat (sometimes **bad wheat**), they used a **small** measure. When they bought or gave change, they used a **large** measure for the **shekel**.

i. Cheating and dishonesty in business is not a small sin, nor is it a sin excused of necessity. God sees it and takes account.

## **B. How God will judge Israel.**

1. (7-8) *The certainty of judgment.*

**The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:**

**"Surely I will never forget any of their works.**

**Shall the land not tremble for this,**

**And everyone mourn who dwells in it?**

**All of it shall swell like the River,**

**Heave and subside**

**Like the River of Egypt.**

a. **Surely I will never forget any of their works:** This reminds us that *time* can never erase sin. We often feel that if we or if others forget the sins of our youth, then God must forget about them also, but that is not the case. Only the atoning work of Jesus can cover sin, not time.

i. We can make a contrast between Amo 8:7 and Heb 6:10 : *For God is not unjust to forget your work*



*and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.* God does not forget the *good* works of His people, and He does not forget the *evil* works of those who reject Him.

b. **All of it shall swell like the River, heave and subside like the River of Egypt:** Amos knew that the Nile River rose and fell regularly. He pictured the land and people of Israel so shaken by judgment that they would **heave and subside** like the rising and receding of the Nile River.

## *2. (9-10) The extent of judgment.*

**“And it shall come to pass in that day,” says the Lord GOD,**

**“That I will make the sun go down at noon,  
And I will darken the earth in broad daylight;  
I will turn your feasts into mourning,  
And all your songs into lamentation;  
I will bring sackcloth on every waist,  
And baldness on every head;  
I will make it like mourning for an only son,  
And its end like a bitter day.”**

a. **That I will make the sun go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in broad daylight:** Because of the reference to celestial catastrophe, many think Amos now looked forward to the circumstances surrounding the ultimate day of the LORD.

i. Though, some think Amos only referred to an eclipse. “Two such eclipses have been calculated to have occurred in Amos’ lifetime: one in 784 B.C., the other in 763 B.C.” (Hubbard).

b. **I will make it like mourning for an only son:** Amos tried to capture the depth of the mourning with

this metaphor. We also remember the connection to Zec 12:10, which describes repentant Israel's humble return to the Messiah in the last days: *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

3. (11-14) *The famine of hearing the Word of God.*

**"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD,  
"That I will send a famine on the land,  
Not a famine of bread,  
Nor a thirst for water,  
But of hearing the words of the LORD.  
They shall wander from sea to sea,  
And from north to east;  
They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD,  
But shall not find it.  
In that day the fair virgins  
And strong young men  
Shall faint from thirst.  
Those who swear by the sin of Samaria,  
Who say,  
'As your god lives, O Dan!'  
And, 'As the way of Beersheba lives!'  
They shall fall and never rise again."**

a. **I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:** Most people think the worst kind of famine is **a famine of bread**, but Amos reminded Israel that the worst kind of famine is a **famine... of hearing the words of the LORD**.

i. Notice carefully the nature of this **famine**. It is not a lack of God's Word, but a **famine... of hearing the words of the LORD**. "The condition described is that of being deaf to the words of Jehovah, not able to hear them. It is not a case of God withholding His revelation; but of people being in such a state that they do not see it, do not hear the words" (Morgan).

ii. It is true that there may come times where there is a famine of God's Word, either through neglect or unfaithfulness. But that isn't what Amos meant here. This was a problem with the *hearer*, not with the *preacher*. The preacher may have his own problems and the hearer as well may have his.

iii. 1Th 2:13 describes the right way to hear the Word of God: *When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

iv. "We may question ourselves, whether we feed enough on God's Word. If we would grow strong, we must feed, not on condiments and sweetmeats, not on tit-bits and scraps, not on versicles and pious sentences; but on the strong meat of the Word, on the doctrines, histories, types of Scripture. Oh for more hunger and thirst for these!" (Meyer)

v. Since it is true that *man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God* (Mat 4:4), then it is true that a famine of hearing God's Word is ultimately worse than a famine of bread.

b. **They shall wander... seeking the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it:** When we push away God's Word for a long time, we may find ourselves in the place where we **shall not find it** even if we wanted to.

i. We remember that the ability to hear God's Word and *benefit* by it is a gift from God, and a gift not to be despised.

ii. Jesus alluded to this principle in the Parable of the Soils and the Sower: *Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him* (Mar 4:24-25). When we seek God, it generally becomes easier to find Him. When we push away God, it generally becomes more difficult to hear and receive His Word.

**c. Those who swear by the sin of Samaria... shall fall and never rise again:** God promised that the idolaters of Israel would face judgment, and it would be lasting judgment.

### **The Destruction of Israel**

**Amo 9:1** I saw the Lord standing by the altar. He gave the command: "Strike the tops of the Temple columns so hard that the foundation will shake. Break them off and let them fall on the heads of the people. I will kill the rest of the people in war. No one will get away; not one will escape.

Amo 9:2 Even if they dig their way down to the world of the dead, I will catch them. Even if they climb up to heaven, I will bring them down.

Amo 9:3 If they hide on the top of Mount Carmel, I will search for them and catch them. If they hide from me at the bottom of the sea, I will command the sea monster to bite them.

Amo 9:4 If they are taken away into captivity by their enemies, I will order them to be put to death. I am determined to destroy them, not to help them."

Amo 9:5 The Sovereign LORD Almighty touches the earth, and it quakes; all who live there mourn. The whole world rises and falls like the Nile River.

Amo 9:6 The LORD builds his home in the heavens, and over the earth he puts the dome of the sky. He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the earth. His name is the LORD!

Amo 9:7 The LORD says, "People of Israel, I think as much of the people of Ethiopia as I do of you. I brought the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from Kir, just as I brought you from Egypt.

Amo 9:8 I, the Sovereign LORD, am watching this sinful kingdom of Israel, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth. But I will not destroy all the descendants of Jacob.

Amo 9:9 "I will give the command and shake the people of Israel like grain in a sieve. I will shake them among the nations to remove all who are worthless.

Amo 9:10 The sinners among my people will be killed in war—all those who say, 'God will not let any harm come near us.' "

### **The Restoration of Israel**

Amo 9:11 The LORD says, "A day is coming when I will restore the kingdom of David, which is like a house fallen into ruins. I will repair its walls and restore it. I will rebuild it and make it as it was long ago.

Amo 9:12 And so the people of Israel will conquer what is left of the land of Edom and all the nations that were once mine," says the LORD, who will cause this to happen.

Amo 9:13 "The days are coming," says the LORD, "when grain will grow faster than it can be harvested, and grapes will grow faster than the wine can be made. The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and the hills will flow with it.

Amo 9:14 I will bring my people back to their land. They will rebuild their ruined cities and live there; they will plant vineyards and drink the wine; they will plant gardens and eat what they grow.

Amo 9:15 I will plant my people on the land I gave them, and they will not be pulled up again." The LORD your God has spoken.

## **Amos 9:1-15**

### **Amos 9 – Raising Up the Ruins**

#### **A. Judgment brings ruin.**

*1. (1-4) God's judgment is inescapable.*

**I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said:**

**"Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake,  
And break them on the heads of them all.**

**I will slay the last of them with the sword.**

**He who flees from them shall not get away,**

**And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.**

**Though they dig into hell,**

**From there my hand shall take them;**

**Though they climb up to heaven,**

**From there I will bring them down;**

**And though they hide themselves on top of Carmel,**

**From there I will search and take them;**

**Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea,**

**From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;**

**Though they go into captivity before their enemies,**

**From there I will command the sword,**

**And it shall slay them.**

**I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."**

a. **I saw the Lord standing by the altar:** In this final vision of Amos, He saw the Lord right at the temple, supervising the work of judgment. Amos wanted Israel to know that God wasn't detached from even His hard work of judgment.

i. "Like the boss of a demolition squad or the commander of an invading enemy, he snaps his orders for the smashing of the temple and takes personal responsibility for seeing that the last offender is brought to justice." (Hubbard)

b. **Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake:** Often, the **threshold** is the structurally strongest part of a house. If the **doorposts** are broken, it shows that the whole house has fallen in. This is a poetic and powerful way to describe complete destruction.

c. **He who flees from them shall not get away:** This was God's way of telling Israel that they could run, but they could not hide from Him and His judgment. Even if they tried to **dig into hell** or **climb up to heaven**, they could not escape their responsibility before God. A high mountain (**Carmel**) or the **bottom of the sea** could not hide them from judgment.

d. **I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good:** An essential part of the Old Covenant was the promise of blessing or cursing (Deuteronomy 28, Leviticus 26) based on Israel's obedience. If Israel was in chronic, systemic disobedience, they could expect that God's eye toward them would be **for harm and not for good**.

i. *But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God... And it shall be, that just as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD will rejoice over you to*

*destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. (Deu 28:15; Deu 28:63)*

*ii. And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant. (Lev 26:23-25 a)*

*iii. How much better to live under the blessing of the New Covenant! The promise of Rom 8:31 stands: *If God is for us, who can be against us?* We know that because of our standing in grace by faith, *God is for us*. All of the **harm** we deserve was completely poured out on Jesus Christ.*

*2. (5-10) Israel sifted among the nations.*

**The Lord GOD of hosts,  
He who touches the earth and it melts,  
And all who dwell there mourn;  
All of it shall swell like the River,  
And subside like the River of Egypt.  
He who builds His layers in the sky,  
And has founded His strata in the earth;  
Who calls for the waters of the sea,  
And pours them out on the face of the earth—  
The LORD is His name.  
“Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me,  
O children of Israel?” says the LORD.  
“Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,  
The Philistines from Caphtor,  
And the Syrians from Kir?  
Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom,  
And I will destroy it from the face of the earth;**



**Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,"  
Says the LORD. "For surely I will command,  
And will sift the house of Israel among all nations,  
As *grain* is sifted in a sieve;  
Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.  
All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword,  
Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor  
confront us.'**

a. **The Lord GOD of hosts, He who touches the earth and it melts:** This wasn't just a poetic introduction. When Israel remembered *who God is* – understanding all His might and glory – then they acted in a way that brought Him glory. Constantly, Amos and the other prophets teach us *what we should do* based on understanding *who God is*.

i. Amos uses the title **Lord GOD** again – used 12 times in Amos 7-9, emphasizing the *sovereignty* of God. "That sovereignty is symbolized in the name of God that dominates this section – *Lord God*, literally 'My Master Yahweh'" (Hubbard).

ii. "What counts is that God's presence is at home everywhere in the universe from top to bottom, and that presence is utterly dependable and permanently to be reckoned with." (Hubbard)

b. **He who builds layers in the sky, and has founded His strata in the earth:** This is a difficult passage to translate, and the New King James does it about as well as any other translation.

i. "It is hard to catch the exact picture of what Yahweh is building in verse 6. The heavenly construction may be a 'staircase' or a 'roof-chamber'... The earthly component is even more difficult to define precisely." (Hubbard)

c. **Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are on the sinful kingdom:** It is striking – and terrible – to hear Israel called **the sinful kingdom**. God wants all His people to be deeply impressed that they cannot presume upon His mercy or their “chosenness.”

i. Israel thought the **Ethiopians** were a remote and insignificant people, so God says, “**Are you not like the people of Ethiopia to Me?**” God also reminds Israel, “Yes, I brought you up out of Egypt, but I also brought **the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir**. Don’t think you are so special that you become proud and presumptuous. You are a **sinful kingdom**.”

d. **And will sift the house of Israel among all nations:** God will use Israel’s exile among the nations to **sift** His people – not to destroy them, but to purify them. In it all, **not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground**. God’s sifting only eliminates the *chaff*, never the **grain** – not even **the smallest grain**. It is only **all the sinners of My people** who shall be guilty under judgment, those who presume too much and never humble themselves.

i. “I think I see you, poor believer, tossed about like that wheat, up and down, right and left, in the sieve, and in the air, never resting. Perhaps it is suggested to you, ‘God is very angry with me.’ No, the farmer is not angry with his wheat when he casts it up and down in the sieve, and neither is God angry with you; this you shall see one day when the light shall show that love ruled in all your griefs.” (Spurgeon)

## **B. Israel restored to blessing and abundance.**

1. (11-12) *Restoring the house of David to Israel.*

**“On that day I will raise up  
The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,  
And repair its damages;  
I will raise up its ruins,  
And rebuild it as in the days of old;  
That they may possess the remnant of Edom,  
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”  
Says the LORD who does this thing.**

a. **I will raise up the tabernacle of David:** Long before the time of Amos, the northern kingdom of Israel rejected the royal house of David. Here God promised to restore David’s royal line – fulfilled in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is of **the tabernacle of David**.

i. This is an abrupt change from the strong message of rebuke and judgment. “The transition from verse 10 to verse 11 is the most abrupt and surprising in the entire book. The sword of judgment gives way to the trowel of reconstruction” (Hubbard).

ii. Without this last passage and change of tone, the book of Amos would be incomplete. “It is now declared that the reason of the divine judgment is not revenge, but the only way in which it is possible to usher in the restored order on which the heart of God is set” (Morgan).

b. **I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old:** God promised to take what was ruined and to **repair** and **rebuild** it. Sometimes God works in a completely new way, letting the old die and doing a work of new creation (2Co 5:17, Isa 43:19). Other times God works to **raise up... ruins, and rebuild**. Both are glorious works of the LORD!

i. Amos knew that Israel was ruined, because he speaks of restoring **the tabernacle of David** instead of the *house of David*. A **tabernacle** is a house, but a

humble one. This "Pictures the 'house' of David that was becoming a dilapidated shack; in Amos' time the Davidic dynasty had fallen so low that it could no longer be called a house" (McComiskey).

c. **And all the Gentiles who are called by My name:** God announced that even **Gentiles who are called by My name** would come under **the tabernacle of David**, a promise fulfilled in Jesus.

i. James, the brother of Jesus, quoted Amo 9:11-12 at the Council of Jerusalem. He used this passage to demonstrate that God promised to reach the Gentiles and to bring them into His kingdom under the Messiah, not under Israel.

ii. Act 15:17 has *So that the rest of mankind* instead of what we have in Amo 9:12 (**that they may possess the remnant of Edom**). This is because the Septuagint, the ancient translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek, translated **Edom** as "*Adam*" – "mankind."

2. (13-15) *Restoring abundance to Israel.*

**"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,  
"When the plowman shall overtake the reaper,  
And the treader of grapes him who sows seed;  
The mountains shall drip with sweet wine,  
And all the hills shall flow *with it*.  
I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;  
They shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them*;  
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;  
They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.  
I will plant them in their land,  
And no longer shall they be pulled up  
From the land I have given them,"  
Says the LORD your God.**

a. **The days are coming:** Under God's inspiration, the prophet Amos ends the book on a note of high hope, looking forward to a day of great prosperity and abundance in Israel. Under the reign of Jeroboam II, they *had* material abundance, but it was not in the LORD. God promised to restore them to prosperity *from Him and in Him*.

b. **When the plowman shall overtake the reaper:** Amos described how miraculous and amazing God's blessing and restoration would be.

i. When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes *quickly*. "*Ploughman and reaper* laboured separately... but here they bump into each other, so abundant are the crops and so eager is the land to grow more" (Hubbard).

ii. When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes from *unexpected places*. Normally, grapevines don't grow well on mountains or high hills, but in the days of Israel's restoration even **the mountains shall drip with sweet wine and all the hills shall flow with it**.

iii. When God releases blessing and restoration, fruit comes with great quality (**drip with sweet wine**).

iv. When God releases blessing and restoration, the work is blessed – but it is still *work*. The **plowman**, the **reaper**, the **treader of grapes**, and **him who sows seed** still have their work to do. God doesn't just do it all for them, but under God's blessing and restoration the work is done with energy and joy. The **plowman** doesn't just wait around; he gets busy even if he starts bumping into the **reaper**! "One sign of a true revival, and indeed an essential part of it is the increased activity of God's laborers" (Spurgeon).

v. However, even if it is not a time of remarkable blessing and restoration, the work of God still deserves our energy and effort. "The duty of the Church is not to be measured by her success. It is as much the minister's duty to preach the gospel in adverse times as in propitious seasons. We are not to think, if God withholds the dew, that we are to withhold the plough. We are not to imagine that, if unfruitful seasons come, we are therefore to cease from sowing our seed. Our business is with act, not with result. The church has to do her duty, even though that duty should bring her no present reward" (Spurgeon).

c. **I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land:** So many of the warnings from the prophet Amos were about the threat of coming captivity and exile. God promised restoration, and looked forward to the day when Israel would never again **be pulled up from the land.**